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Mills, Ogden Livingston

Speech...

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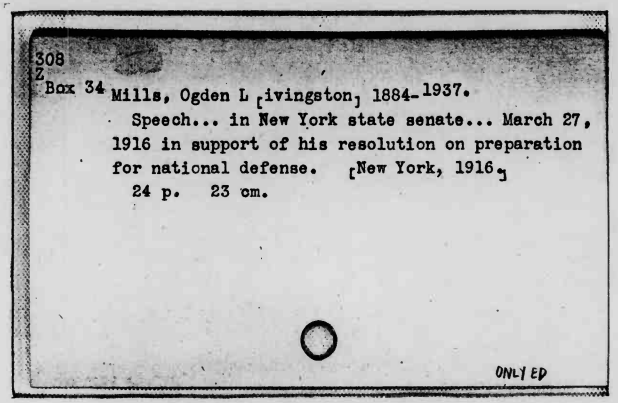
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SPEECH OF

HON. OGDEN L. MILLS

IN

NEW YORK STATE SENATE

MONDAY EVENING, MARCH 27, 1916

IN SUPPORT OF HIS RESOLUTION

ON

Preparation for National Defence

COMPLIMENTS OF
OGDEN L. MILLS,
SENATOR 17TH DISTRICT

In dealing with grave questions of public policy which involve the future, possibly the life, of a nation, it is well to study the lives of other nations, to take heed of the failures and their causes, and to analyze the general tendencies and forces which seem to control the destinies of nations as of individuals. Before dealing, then, with the specific questions before us, I am going to take the liberty of turning back the pages of history and of reading to you brief quotations from the speeches of a great statesman of a free republic who warned his countrymen to prepare and whose countrymen failed to heed that warning; words which, though uttered nineteen hundred and sixty-five years ago, might just as well have been thundered yesterday in the halls of Congress, did we possess a Demosthenes to utter them. In the language of Grote the historian:

> "All depended upon her will, upon the question whether her citizens were prepared in their own minds to incur the expense and fatigue of a vigorous foreign policy, whether they would handle their pikes, open their purses and forego the comforts of home for the maintenance of Grecian and Athenian liberty against a growing but not as yet irresistible destroyer. To such sacrifices the Athenians could not bring themselves to submit; and in consequence of that reluctance, they were driven in the end to a much graver and more irreparable sacrifice—loss of liberty, dignity and security. Now, it was precisely at such a moment and when such a question was pending that the influence of the peace-loving Phokion was most ruinous . . . thus playing the game of Philip and siding, though himself incorruptible, with the orators in Philip's pay."

I have cited this particular passage from Grote because, though our situation is in many respects not analogous, yet there are points in common, not the least of which is the picture which this passage evokes of the

modern Phokion from Nebraska preaching the doctrine of peace and unpreparedness at a time of great national peril.

Far other was the advice of Demosthenes:

> "But what I do wonder at is that you, Athenians —who in former days contended for Pan-Hellenic freedom against the Lacedaemonians—who scorning unjust aggrandizement for yourselves, fought in person and lavished your substance to protect the rights of other Greeks—that you now shrink from personal service and payment of money for the defence of your own possessions. . . . We must not only come forward vigorously and heartily with persons and with money, but each man must embrace faithfully his share of patriotic obligation."

And again:

> "You have departed, Athenians, from that plan of government which your ancestors laid down. You are persuaded by your leaders that to be just among the Greeks, to keep your forces ready to redress the injured, is an unnecessary and vain expense. You are taught to think that to lie down in indolence, to be free from public cares, to abandon all your interests one by one, a prey to the vigilance and craft of others, is to be perfectly secure and surprisingly happy. . . . Of all the dangers of the several States, none is so dreadful as those which threaten ours . . . because of all others we have been most regardless of our interests. . . . If from the variety of merchandise and plenty of provisions you flatter yourselves that the State is not in danger, you judge unworthily and falsely. Hence we might determine whether our markets were well or ill supplied, but the strength of that state which is regarded by all, who aim at the sovereignty of Greece as the sole obstacle of their designs—the well-known guardian of liberty—is not surely to be judged by its vendibles. No! we should inquire whether it be secure of the affections of its allies; whether it be powerful in arms. These

> are the points to be considered, and in these, instead of being well provided, you are totally deficient."

These words went unheeded well-nigh two thousand years ago, and the first of the great democracies fell, never to rise. Without changing a sentence; with hardly the alteration of a word, they can be repeated with full force on the floor of this Senate tonight.

Since then, many a state and city has followed Athens. For our part, however, we need go no further than our own history to learn the danger of careless unconcern and of rash over-confidence. Turn to the debates which took place in Washington prior to the War of 1812. You will find the same fallacies at work; the same divided councils; the same inability to formulate and adopt a comprehensive and real program for national defence, as seem to exist today.

> "In the Republican Party (the Democratic Party of today) any vote for a standing army had been hitherto considered a crime. The Federalists in 1801 had left a force of five thousand men; Jefferson reduced it to three thousand. The Republican Party believed in a militia but neglected it. Throughout the Southern States the militia was undisciplined and unarmed; but in Massachusetts, as President Jefferson was beginning to notice, the Federalists took much care of their State soldiery. The United States fort at Newport was garrisoned only by goats, and the strategic line of Lake Champlain and the Hudson River, which divided New England from the rest of the Union, lay open to an enemy. In view of war with England, such negligence became wanton. Jefferson saw that an army must be raised, but many of his truest followers held that militia only could be trusted, and that the risk of conquest from abroad was better than military despotism at home."

In 1810, two years before the war, Mr. Randolph of Virginia, in the debate on the reduction of the military and naval establishments, spoke as follows:

> "With respect to war, we have—thank God!—in the Atlantic a fosse wide and deep enough to keep off any immediate danger to our territory. The belligerents of Europe know, as well as we feel, that war is out of the question."

To the same effect was the speech of Representative Burwell of Virginia:

> "I shall certainly vote to reduce the army of the United States; and if the House should decide that it will not employ the navy of the United States in the protection of commerce, I shall certainly vote also to reduce the naval establishment. I am perfectly convinced that the circumstances under which I voted for the increase of the army and navy have passed away. . . . It is a singular phenomenon to see any nation enjoying peace at this time. This exemption from the general lot claims the gratitude of every man in the country. So far as I am concerned in the affairs of the nation, I have but a single object in view,—namely, to preserve peace; and my votes are predicated on that ground."

This within two years of a war in which the United States saw its territory invaded and its Capital burned.

The minority, on the other hand, was as indignant with the majority's failure to protect American rights as is the minority today, if Senator Root's recent speech expressed truly the sentiments of the Republican Party.

> "Richard M. Johnson almost avowed that he should vote for reducing army and navy in order to punish the men who had made them useless:—
>
> "'To our humiliation and everlasting degradation we have refused to use the means in our power to induce foreign nations to do us justice. . . . The annals of human nature have not given to the world the sad example of a nation so powerful, so free, so intelligent, so jealous of their rights and at the same time so grossly insulted, so materially injured, under such extraordinary forbearance. . . . We are afraid to trust ourselves, and we pretend that we are afraid to trust the people. My hopes have rested and always will rest upon the people; they constitute my last hope. We may disgrace ourselves, but the people will rise in the majesty of their strength, and the world will be interested in the spectacle.'"

And so, crimination and recrimination, debate and argument, talk and inaction, went on until war itself settled the issue of preparedness and unpreparedness,—a war that, according to Major-General Wood, was highly discreditable to us.

> "With the exception of a drawn battle at Lundy's Lane and an unimproved victory on the Thames, our land operations were not only disastrous but generally highly discreditable. We abandoned Washington to only about a force of 60 per cent. of that of the defenders, with a loss on our side of eight killed and eleven wounded. The greatest force of regulars which England had in this country at any time during the war was a little over sixteen thousand eight hundred. There was, of course, a considerable number of Indians and militia, but this combined force was only a small fraction of our numerically greater force. . . . On the water we had many highly creditable ship actions and some creditable fleet actions, but, generally speaking, on the high seas our small force was destroyed and our gallant but small navy bottled up."

This last is hardly to be wondered at when we find that the Government as early as 1807 had refused to build any more frigates, and had actually provided that those

in existence should be tied up and used "to serve as receptacles for enlisting seamen to fill the gunboats occasionally". The fatuous policy of substituting flat-bottomed gunboats for sea-going men-of-war has not been equalled until Mr. Ford recently suggested the substitution of pocket submarines for dreadnaughts and battle cruisers.

What of the example of England in our own day? Immediately prior to the present war, it was reckoned that after taking into consideration all the forces that were needed for other purposes and other fronts, Germany would have available an army for the invasion of France of rather more than a million and three quarters of men, while France could only put into the field and maintain for six months some one million three hundred thousand men. There was, therefore, a deficiency of some five hundred thousand men, which would be reduced to three hundred and forty thousand by the help of the small British expeditionary force of one hundred and sixty thousand. That these three hundred and forty thousand men might in the first onset and clash prove the decisive factor, was so patent as to be well recognized by the military authorities in England. Had England been in a position to place in the field at the beginning of the war at least half a million trained men and so swing the advantage of numbers to the Entente Powers, it is quite possible that there never would have been a war. Certain it is that many of the great sacrifices which the English people have since been called upon to make would have been avoided by this measure of preparedness.

A nation whose policy outruns its power to support that policy, invites disaster. Yet that is precisely the danger which British statesmen undertook to incur, partly because of the strong pacifist agitation and partly because of the unpopularity which each of the great parties feared would follow a demand on the people of England to

make the sacrifices incident to real preparation. England's safety and the integrity of her empire depended on the maintenance of the balance of power in Europe. The balance of power depended upon her ability and willingness to meet armament with armament. Yet the force which she maintained was totally inadequate for that purpose, and that in the face of repeated warnings. The late Lord Roberts, on October 22, 1912, stated but the fact when he said:

> "Our Army, as a belligerent factor in European politics, is almost a negligible quantity. This Empire is at all times practically defenceless beyond its first line. Such an empire invites war. Its assumed security amid the armaments of Europe, and now of Asia, is insolent and provocative."

The German view of the question was stated by the Imperial Chancellor on April 7, 1913, when introducing the army bill:

> "History knows of no people which came to disaster because it had exhausted itself in the making of its defences; but history knows of many peoples which have perished because, living in prosperity and luxury, they neglected their defences. A people which thinks that it is not rich enough to maintain its armaments shows merely that it has played its part."

The English people neglected the lesson of history which the Germans had learned full well, and have paid for it dearly. They have sent their best, because the best always go first, and have lost them in an unequal contest against an enemy their equal in bravery and who had the advantage of preparation and thorough training. As the father of one of these young Englishmen wrote General Wood:

> "It was sad enough and hard enough to lose the boy, but I shall never be able to get rid of the feeling

that neither he nor his mates had a sporting chance; they were unprepared and untrained."

If, as I have already stated, the vigor of a nation's policy, particularly its foreign policy, is largely dependent upon its armed power to support that policy, the converse is also true: the size and quality of armament is largely dependent upon a nation's position in the world, the policy to which it is committed and the extent of its possessions, wealth and commerce. It becomes necessary, therefore, in dealing with national preparedness to consider first the need for preparedness in the light of the position occupied by the United States. I know, of course, that we have been brought up on the theory that, protected by leagues of ocean and free from foreign entanglement, we are in a position to follow our destiny without fear of attack or hindrance. The facts, however, by no means bear out this popular fallacy. Far from occupying the position of splendid isolation which we so fondly imagine, we have, almost from the very beginning of our life as a nation, insisted, and very properly insisted, not only in sharing the commerce of the world, in enjoying the pleasures and profits of intercourse with other people, but on laying down a national policy which necessarily ran counter, and which runs counter, to the policy of foreign nations. Almost a hundred years ago the Monroe doctrine forbade the colonization of South America, while more recently we have undertaken to exclude as undesirable the citizens of one of the most powerful nations of the East. We undertook to tell Spain how she should run Cuba, and as a result of a war with that country assumed the responsibilities and defence of colonial possessions. Our citizens wander to the farthest corners of the earth. Our capital seeks investment in many lands, while our merchant-marine, though pitifully small, carries the American flag throughout the seven seas. And these

citizens and these investments and these ships are entitled to the protection of the American Government, as long as the American Nation continues to exist as a nation. And last, though by no means least, we are the richest people in the world. We are the proud possessors of the greater part of a vast continent, the richness and resources of which can hardly be measured. We are the fortunate owners of this great wealth and these mighty possessions of which others are naturally and covetously envious, in a world where justice and right have temporarily succumbed and where the sword of might rules supreme. Even if these facts did not speak for themselves, the lesson of the last two years cannot be overlooked, when hardly a month has gone by in which we have not faced the possibility of war for the protection of the property, the rights and the liberty of our citizens, either with Mexico or with one or more of the great European Powers.

Should war come—which God forbid!—are we, the American people, today in a position to defend our country against a first-class power? Humiliating as it it, the answer must be unqualifiedly in the negative.

First, as to the Navy, our first line of defence. On January 29, 1916, in Cleveland, Ohio, the President of the United States stated as follows:

> "And the Navy of the United States. You have been told that it is the second in strength in the world. I am sorry to say that experts do not agree with those who tell you that. Reckoning by its actual strength, I believe it to be one of the most efficient navies in the world, but its strength ranks fourth, not second. And you must reckon with the fact that it is necessary that that should be our first arm of defence, and you ought to insist that everything should be done that it is possible for us to do to bring the Navy up to an adequate standard of strength and efficiency."

And again, in Kansas City, Missouri, on February 2, 1916, he said:

> "Do you know the sweep of the coast from the canal to Alaska? It is nearly one-fourth the circumference of the earth. And the coast from the St. Lawrence to the Gulf? Do you think a Navy that ranks fourth is sufficient?"

The present war has demonstrated beyond question the value of submarines to the fleet, yet it appears that in 1914 when a mobilization of the Atlantic Submarine Flotilla was ordered at Hampton Roads, only one submarine could efficiently take part in the maneuvres.

Battle cruisers. The report of the Secretary of the Navy for 1915 states: "The need for battle cruisers seems imperative". The United States does not possess a single battle cruiser.

The report continues: "An adequate supply of proper scouts is essential". The United States has not got a single fast scouting ship.

We have no auxiliaries properly built and equipped with trained Americans.

We are short of a proper naval ammunition reserve.

We have but 23 aeroplanes, while

France has	22	dirigibles and	1,400	aeroplanes
Russia	18	"	"	800	"
Great Britain	9	"	"	400	"
Belgium	2	"	"	100	"
Servia				60	"
Germany	40	"	"	1,000	"
Austria	8	"	"	400	"

And last but not least, there is immediate need for an increase in the personnel. We are between fifty and fifty-five thousand men short of what would be required in war. The 21 battleships of the Atlantic Fleet in commission are 5,600 men short, or nearly 30 per cent. of their peace complement. The ships in commission in the whole Atlantic Fleet are 6,700 men short. The situation in regard to officers is fully as serious, and there is no question that 2,000 more at least are sorely needed.

With these facts before us, with our Navy not only fourth in strength but short of men, short of ammunition, without battle cruisers or fast scouting ships and deficient in submarines and aeroplanes, those two branches of service so highly valuable in modern naval warfare, can anyone question that it is the solemn duty, not only of every member of this Legislature, but every citizen of the State, to urge his representatives in Congress to do all in their power to place our Navy upon a basis adequate for national defence that is second in strength in the world?

Should the Navy fail us, and should the enemy get command of the ocean, we know from the opinion of our own General Staff that "in a single expedition more than one European nation can readily transport across the Atlantic Ocean as many as 400,000 men and land them inside of one month. It is true that our principal harbors are fortified, but in the vital area between Portland, Maine, and the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay, there are no less than 116 places, excluding beaches and fortified harbors, where this enemy could disembark. Such a force would probably be divided up into four or even eight separate armies, which would seize a number of strategic points and this would necessarily require a large dispersion of defending troops. With these strategic points held and the probable occupation of one of our large important coast cities, it is estimated that within two months after the control of the sea is obtained, the invading force could be increased to 1,500,000 men. To meet such a force we have at present in this country a mobile army of 36,000 men, or only three times the police force of New York City. There are, of course, militia regiments scattered all over the country which could be drawn on, but they would be without artillery

and would be unaccustomed to work in large units, and their concentration at any point would necessarily leave the rest of the country entirely defenceless."

The Chief of Staff has estimated that in anticipation of war we need, exclusive of giant guns, 2,834 field guns, whereas we have but 176 batteries completed, or 704 guns. The heaviest piece of field artillery which is now in our service is a 6-inch howitzer, which could hardly contend with the mammoth guns of the European Powers.

The total number of completed rounds of ammunition to serve these guns are but 481,000, whereas European reports have mentioned that as many as a thousand rounds of field-artillery ammunition are sometimes fired in a single day by a single gun. The Chief of Staff, in his official report of November 15, 1914, estimates that we need at least 11,790,850 rounds.

In so far as our seacoast defences are concerned, it will be of interest to the citizens of New York City to know that ships can stand outside of Rockaway Beach, fire from the whole width of Long Island and Brooklyn and reach New York, and still be beyond the range of any gun that we have mounted. The garrisons for the coast defences of Portsmouth, the Delaware, the Potomac, the Cape Fear, Charleston, Key West, Tampa, Mobile, Galveston and the Columbia, are greatly below what they should be. In fact, many of the coast fortifications have been so stripped of the personnel, that they have been placed in the hands of caretakers. When our oversea fortifications are complete, we will have only 44 per cent. of the officers and 53 per cent. of the enlisted men necessary for providing a minimum manning body for all mines and for that one-half of the guns and mortars which it is contemplated shall be manned by regular troops.

> "If we took every available regular we have got in this country, we would not have enough troops to supply what we call coast artillery support, that is, those relatively small detachments that have to be placed with the armament to protect against possible raids by the enemy."

In so far as officers are concerned, let me read to you a quotation from the testimony of Colonel Glenn, Chief of the Staff of the Department of the East, First Division:

> "The most important need of our country, in my opinion, is reserve officers and noncommissioned officers. Of commissioned officers we now have about 5,000 in the regular establishment and about 8,000 partially trained officers in the National Guard. We should have not less than 50,000 reserve officers immediately available, and as an illustration of this need, I invite your attention to the fact that the Russian Army in one campaign of about 10 days lost between nineteen and twenty thousand of its officers. The English lost the great majority of the officers they sent over in their first expedition into France, which included practically all of their trained commissioned personnel, and are now struggling with the problem of training several million of men with untrained officers and noncommissioned officers. No system that we have yet evolved will produce the number of commissioned and noncommissioned officers that we will need, but it is believed that this result can be accomplished at relatively small expense through enlargement of West Point, the utilization of the Regular Army in the proper way, and especially in the encouragement and regulation of the military schools, land grant colleges and universities throughout the country. Without these reserve officers and noncommissioned officers it will be impossible to train within any reasonable time an effective Army of any sort."

In short, we need men, officers, guns, ammunition and coast defences, before we can be said to be prepared for defence in any sense of the word. How are we to obtain them? Guns, ammunition and fortifications are largely

questions of appropriating sufficient money. The great problem is (1) how to put a sufficient number of trained men in the field; (2) how to train those men prior to the time of need. For, in the end, battles are won by men, and to win battles, men must be trained.

> "Military training involves two essentials—(1) perfection in the mechanical or technical duties pertaining to a particular arm, and (2) discipline, 'the effect of which is to convert the disciplined man into one who executes orders mechanically but at the same time leaves his mind free to meet unexpected conditions'."

Experience has taught us that we cannot rely on the volunteer system. In the Revolution our greatest forces were in 1776 about 89,000 men, and in 1781 they had dwindled to 29,000 men in spite of large bounties in money and land. The same thing took place in the War of 1812. In the Civil War the volunteer system failed again, and both North and South had to resort to the forced draft with all its evils, while the desertions have been estimated as high as 523,000 out of a total enlistment in the Northern armies of 2,700,000 men.

Many plans have been suggested, but of the many four are deserving of our particular attention:

(1) The increase of the Regular Army.

(2) An increase in the number of the National Guard by paying them from the Federal treasury, coupled with greater control by the Federal Government over the National Guard.

(3) The adoption of a form of compulsory military service, as exemplified by the Swiss and Australian systems.

(4) The creation of a force of Federal Volunteers, to be under the control of the National Government, and to be trained intensively for short periods of time.

Everyone, except the extreme pacifist, is, I think, agreed that the Regular Army should be increased, but there is a limit in the number of men that can be obtained under our present volunteer system, and one of our main endeavors must be the creation of a proper reserve. While I have not as yet been able to obtain a copy of the so-called Chamberlain Bill recently reported by the Senate Committee on Military Affairs, from newspaper extracts this bill appears to meet the requirements of the Regular Army. It provides for a peace strength of 178,000 men, and a full war strength of 225,000 men, and for an increase of the number of officers through a modification of the West Point rule. Enlistment is fixed at seven years, four with colors and three in reserve, and provision is made for the creation of a proper reserve by permitting efficient men to be discharged into the reserve on the recommendation of their commanders at the end of one and two years. If this Chamberlain Bill is adopted, it is probable that the needs of the Regular Army will have been covered.

But a Federal Army of 178,000 men, a large number of whom are needed to garrison the Panama Canal and our foreign possessions, and to man our coast defences, will be inadequate to meet an invasion. It is apparent, therefore, that we must supplement our Regular Army by the addition of at least 350,000 to 400,000 trained citizen soldiers. This brings us to plan number two, the one most in favor with the majority party in Congress, and which the President is, apparently, willing to support, since Mr. Garrison's resignation was forced on this very issue. Stated in a few words, this plan contemplates making the State militia our second line of defence, by increasing their numbers and improving their discipline, training and equipment. It is contended that the requisite number of men can be obtained in the militia by paying both the rank and file and the officers, and

that the militia can be made into a trained national army by giving the Federal Government some measure of control over the various regiments, though still leaving them under the jurisdiction of the various State authorities.

The plan is not only thoroughly unsound, but a very dangerous one, because its adoption will lull the unknowing—and needless to say that the great majority of our people are not experts in military affairs—into the belief that national preparedness has been provided for, whereas nothing of the kind will have been accomplished.

You cannot create a national army out of 48 independent units, commanded by 48 independent generals and trained according to 48 different standards, and the Constitution plainly forbids the giving to the National Government of that degree of control over the militia which would permit its welding into a great national force. The Constitution provides that the President of the United States shall be the Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy, and "of the militia of the several States when called into the active service of the United States." In Section 8 of Article I, Congress is authorized to call out the militia "to execute the laws of the Union, suppress insurrection and repel invasion". In the next clause of the same section, Congress is empowered to arm and discipline the militia and to govern such part of them as may be employed in the service of the United States "reserving to the States, respectively, the appointment of the officers and the authority of training the militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress". There is no question in my mind but that we must read the second clause in the light of the first, and that the control of Congress over the militia can be exercised only when the militia has been called out either to execute the laws of the United States, to suppress insurrection or to repel invasion. But even if this be

not so, "the appointment of the officers and the authority of training the militia" is specifically reserved to the States, and therefore though Congress may lay down the rules of discipline, the carrying out of these rules remains in the hands of 48 different sovereignties.

These are not mere academic expressions of opinion, for the War of 1812 amply demonstrated the difficulty under our Constitution of treating the militia as a national army. At the beginning of the war the governments of Massachusetts and Connecticut refused to furnish their quotas of the 100,000 militia authorized by the Act of April 10, 1812, the Supreme Court of Massachusetts holding that the right to determine whether such exigency existed as warranted the calling out of the militia resided in the Governors of the States rather than in the President of the United States and in Congress. It is only fair to state that this decision has since been overruled by the Supreme Court of the United States; but the incident is illustrative of the difficulties arising from divided jurisdiction.

On the 12th of October, 1812, was fought the battle of Queenstown in the neighborhood of Lewiston and Fort Niagara. General Van Rensselaer commanded a small force of some 600 men, regulars and militia. The regulars, 225 strong, crossed the river, attacked the British and captured the heights. The British, reinforced, counter-attacked, but the militia on our side of the river, although ordered and implored by their commander to support their fellow-countrymen, refused to cross the river on the ground that under the Constitution they could only be called out to resist an invasion, as a result of which the British recaptured the heights and either killed or made prisoner the entire force. General Armstrong, in his "Notices", in giving a number of reasons to explain the loss of the engagement, includes among them: "The omission to ascertain previously to

the adoption of the project the political sentiment of the militia on the question of invasion".

Again in 1814, when a British force began an advance on Plattsburgh, General MacComb sent an express earnestly calling on Governor Chittenden to send the Vermont militia to the assistance of Plattsburgh, but the Governor, who was a pro-British sympathizer, took the position that under the Constitution the militia could not leave the State, and refused to order the militia regiments to the support of the United States Army defending Plattsburgh. Incredible as these events seem, they furnish incontestable proof of the danger of the system at present favored by Congress as a means of national defence.

Moreover, there is no reason to believe that the proposed plan will produce the necessary number of men. The fact is, that ever since 1903, when the so-called Dick Bill was adopted, the Federal Government has systematically encouraged the National Guard. It has issued arms, ammunition and supplies to the Guard, and has authorized participation in the joint maneuvres with the Regular Army, during which maneuvres the militia participating received the same pay, subsistence and transportation as the men in the Regular Army. In these and other ways the National Government has spent from two and a half to five or more million dollars a year on the State militia. Yet, as compared with the increase in population, the number of the Guard has actually decreased. The fact is, that as purely State forces, one of the prime functions of our State militia is to do a police duty at home, as a result of which there has grown up among the laboring classes a feeling that the militia is simply a force to be used in the oppression of labor, and many of the labor unions use their influence to prevent their members from joining militia

regiments. Until the States have made other provisions for the suppression of disorder and riots, and as long as this feeling of prejudice exists among the great mass of laboring men, it is idle to hope to make of the militia a truly representative national force. Nor do any of the provisions of the proposed bill meet this situation.

But aside from being in all probability futile in so far as increase of numbers is concerned, the payment feature has defects of a more positive character. It will tend, and inevitably tend, to put the militia up to its neck in politics, and politics and military efficiency are as far apart as the poles. I cannot do better in this connection than to quote from the minority report of the Committee on Military Affairs of the House of Representatives of December 10, 1912, and in respect thereto desire to call your attention to the fact that Representative Hay, who was then Chairman of this same Committee, declined to sign the majority report favoring the plan of paying the militia from the Federal treasury, and actually, I understand, approved the minority report from which I am about to read:

> "The legislation proposed by the Committee on Military Affairs as a substitute for the bill (H. R. 8141), to further increase the efficiency of the organized militia of the United States and for other purposes, is a measure that is pregnant with greater possibilities of evil in a financial way, and that gives less assurance of compensating advantages of any kind than any measure that has ever been enacted by Congress with regard to the State militia. . . . It will inevitably entail upon the general government an enormous expense which may be found in dire emergency to have been wasted, a course that will merely lead to the creation of a great military force that will become so powerful politically that Congress will no more be able to resist its demands than it has

been able to resist the demands of the far less completely organized and manageable army of pension applicants and their friends."

The ideal method of providing for a defence of the country is that prevailing in the Republic of Switzerland and in the free Commonwealth of Australia—a method which recognizes the obligation on the part of every citizen to contribute his share of personal service in the country defence. Switzerland, with a population of four million, can put in the field inside of two days 200,000 men, and in a week 300,000 men. As a result, though surrounded by belligerents, her territory is to-day inviolate. How does she do it? Every schoolboy is taught that his country has a claim on him. From an early age he is carefully trained in all manner of athletic exercises, such as will fit him later on to fall in readily with technical military instruction. As the boys become older, rifle shooting is carefully encouraged through clubs, associations and through the giving of prizes by the various cantons. When he attains the age of 20 years, he is required to take a physical and mental test, and if he passes becomes a recruit and receives in training camps from 60 to 90 days' instruction. Thereafter for eleven years, from the ages of 21 to 32, he is called out for eleven days' training every year, after which he is transferred to the first reserve, as a member of which until he is 48, he is called upon to do eleven days of service every alternate year. Officers are chosen according to merit, and are given special courses of study; nor is any man fitted for promotion permitted to decline the honor.

The Australian system is constructed along similar lines. Both are based on a fundamental principle of democracy, that equal rights imply equal duties, and that if the citizens of a free government desire to maintain their liberties and the privileges they enjoy, they must, each and every one, be prepared to make some measure

of personal sacrifice. In this connection the following quotation from a recent speech of Hon. William Hughes, Prime Minister of Australia, is interesting:

"It had been very well for us and very well for mankind if Britain had prepared as well by land as by sea. If she had done that, there would have been no war to-day. And this I say—and it is all that I shall say on this point—that Australia has been able to do what she has done because we have adopted as the corner-stone of our democratic edifice the system of compulsory military training. We believe that there is but one way by which a nation, being free, can remain so, and that is that every man shall not only be willing to defend his country, but be able to do so. And we think that if it is right—as it surely is—that a democracy should educate its citizens so that the franchise shall be wisely exercised—so we think that the state should train the citizen so that he may be able to defend his country, his home and his liberties. Two years before the outbreak of war we had established in Australia a system of universal military training. To this we owe the complex and widespread organization for training officers, non-commissioned officers, manufacturing small arms, ammunition, clothing, and so on, without which we should have been almost helpless in this great struggle. A small community of under five millions of people, yet we have been able to train, to equip from head to foot, a great army of men. It is a great thing and one which we may mention with pride and satisfaction that Canada and Australia have together put into the field nearly twice the number of the original British Expeditionary Force. We have put close on 300,000 men between us of first-class fighting men in the field. Australia could not have done her part unless we had a great organization created to prepare for danger. This one lesson must be learned from this great war. Some day the wings of the Dove of Peace may beat a soft lullaby throughout the land. But

that day is not yet. Until that day dawns it is the duty of free men to be as able as well as to be willing to defend their country. Neither liberty nor our national rights can ever be safe when we neglect the defence of our country. This is a primary duty of citizenship of a free country. Nor can it be safe if we entrust it to volunteers. It cannot be ignored nor left to volunteers. For, as it concerns all, so must it apply to all. Liberty, the very basis upon which our national edifice rests; Liberty, the very breath of our being; Liberty, without which the mere material side of civilization is a dry husk, must be defended by all."

But though we in this country have made, in the last few months, giant strides toward the recognition of the only truly democratic method of preparation for defence, it may be that the people are not quite prepared as yet to accept it, and if so, we are reluctantly obliged to turn our attention and give our support to the next best plan.

Instead of attempting to create a national army out of the State militia, what we should do is to create a force of Federal Volunteers, wholly under the control of the National Government. This can be accomplished either by detailed legislative act, providing in all its details for the recruiting, term of enlistment and training of such force, or preferably by the utilization of the Volunteer Act of 1914, a proposition which looks to the utilization in peace time for the raising of a volunteer army for training, of the means we are required to use in war for the raising of a volunteer army for fighting. This proposition is, I understand, at present before the Committee on Military Affairs of the United States Senate. It places in the President wide discretionary powers as to the term of enlistment, the period of service with the colors and with the reserve, the period of training, etc., and has great advantages over the less flexible provisions contained in the detailed statute.

Conditions differ in different parts of the country. This would permit the President to send recruiting officers with enlistment contracts drafted to meet local conditions, so that if one section preferred six months intensified training and another section favored more diffusive training, each would be in a position to make its choice. In other words, such a bill would give the volunteer system, which we must of necessity rely on, the best chance of being worked out step by step in the light of experience.

There are those, of course, who will contend that any volunteer system is doomed to failure, and that our citizens will not respond in sufficient numbers. I cannot believe this to be the case. Our young men are no less patriotic than those of England or of Canada, and if they enlist in the same proportion to population as did the young men in England prior to the war, our volunteer army will consist of no less than 700,000 men, while if they do as well as the young Canadians prior to the war, we will have a citizens' army of no less than 800,000 men. A volunteer system is not ideal, because it unnecessarily places a disproportionate part of the burden on the more willing and patriotic young men, while permitting others to decline to contribute their share. But this is not the issue today. The choice lies between the paid militia plan and the Federal volunteer army of trained citizens, and of the two I am firmly convinced that the representatives of this State should support the latter.

We are facing a grave national crisis such as comes to a nation but a few times in its life, and upon the proper solution of which our whole future as a nation may depend. There is no disguising the seriousness of the times. The danger of lying defenceless before possible foreign aggression, is sufficiently patent to need no further emphasis by words. But greater even than the

issue of preparedness is the question of whether our moral fibre has become so weakened as to make us unwilling to submit to the sacrifices necessary to make us ready? Has the persistent campaign of the soft-headed self-advertisers and modern Phokions so undermined the sturdy Americanism of the men of '76 and '61 to cause their descendants to think as did the Athenians, "that to lie down in indolence and to be free from public cares . . . is to be perfectly secure and surprisingly happy"? I do not—I cannot believe so! The answer, however, will be found in the manner and faithfulness with which the Executive in the future preserves our rights entrusted to his care, the armed forces which our representatives in Congress are willing to grant him to make his policy effective, and the response of the people to the call which will be made on their purses and persons.

Above all, our representatives must stand firmly and united for a real and not a sham measure of national preparedness. They must stand vigorously and firmly for a national policy which does not hesitate to defend American citizens, American property, American rights and American honor, be the aggressor never so powerful, and they must see to it that our Government is furnished with the means and men, with the power, in short, of making that policy effective. It is not our privilege to actively participate in this great work, but we can at least to-day, by a unanimous vote, irrespective of party lines, assure the Congressmen and Senators from New York, that the State Legislature stands firmly with them in their efforts to prove to the world that the greatest of democracies is willing to make the sacrifices necessary to defend its liberty. Let them serve notice on all the great Powers that we, the citizens of this Free Republic, are not too proud to fight in defence of our rights, and will from now on be prepared to do so if occasion requires.

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